
Writer's Statement about "Simple Forms of Dance and Movement Literacy"

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While I have been dancing since I was four years old, I never realized the complexity of dance until I took a college-level ballet class. Taking dance as a subject for an accredited university is not like a typical studio class. Sure, both classes cost money, and both teach movement practices; however, dancing for credit is much more language- and writing-intensive than might be expected. For instance, I grew up speaking French ballet terms in my studio dance classes; but in the college-level ballet course, I had to memorize the written form and English definition of over seventy-five French ballet terms. It was because of my experience in a college ballet course that I decided to delve further into what kinds of dance literacy forms existed, how they differ from one another, and how they are applied in real life.

I did have some difficulty explaining my observational research during this project. As I began sharing my evidence with my professor, Dr. Roozen, ballet terms that had always made sense to me as a dancer suddenly became troublesome to describe. At one point, Dr. Roozen and I were discussing composition processes of choreography and I was trying to describe how dancers don't always write words to document their choreography—often times, they just use symbols. After doing the best I could to describe this verbally, I realized that I could just show him the composition process through photographic evidence. Eventually, taking pictures of notes, writing, and symbols of my research participants became one of my central focuses of my paper for the simple fact that it provided easier communication for those audience members who have never been involved in the art of dance.

This brings me to the audience of the paper. While there is great scholarly research done on dance literacy practices, there isn't a significant amount of published work on the subject in comparison to other literacy topics; thus, there are only a handful of dance literacy scholars. I found that dance literacy scholars were indeed informed of complex forms of dance literacies—such as movement analysis—but were remiss to recognize the sort of simple and obvious forms of dance literacy that I found in my research. Originally, my intentions for writing this paper were to reach out to those select few dance literacy scholars and contribute to their conversation on the topic. While those intentions remain, I have extended my audience to include those scholars of the community interested in literacy forms in general. My hope is that these other literacy scholars (i.e. not associated with dance literacy), especially those who focus on pedagogy, will consider the forms of dance literacy I found as substantial practices—ones that they may be able to incorporate into their own literacy analyses.

Overall, I am extremely pleased that I was able to meld together my love of writing and my passion for dance. I so enjoyed every process of this project, and I wish that others may find it as fascinating as I do.